

## IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Cancelled)

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

Claim 3 (Cancelled)

Claim 4 (Cancelled)

Claim 5 (currently amended) ~~The image-protecting film according to claim 1,~~ An image-protecting film having a protective layer releasably laminated on a support and to be heat transferred onto an image surface of recorded matter on which an image has been formed,

wherein the surface of the support on which the protective layer is laminated has a surface roughness (Ra) according to JIS-B0601 of from 0.2 to 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$ ,

wherein the protective layer comprises a surface protective layer and an adhesive layer sequentially laminated from the support side,

wherein the surface protective layer comprises a continuous phase formed of a thermoplastic resin and a dispersed phase formed of a thermoplastic resin dispersed in the continuous phase,

wherein the thermoplastic resin forming the continuous phase has a glass transition temperature from -50 to 60°C, and the thermoplastic resin forming the dispersed phase has a glass transition temperature of 60°C or higher, and wherein the protective layer contains inorganic particles and a wax.

Claim 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7 (Cancelled)

Claim 8 (Cancelled)

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended) ~~The image-protecting film according to claim 1, An image-protecting film having a protective layer releasably laminated on a support and to be heat transferred onto an image surface of recorded matter on which an image has been formed,~~

wherein the surface of the support on which the protective layer is laminated has a surface roughness (Ra) according to JIS-B0601 of from 0.2 to 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$ ,

wherein the protective layer comprises a surface protective layer and an adhesive layer sequentially laminated from the support side,

wherein the surface protective layer comprises a continuous phase formed of a thermoplastic resin and a dispersed phase formed of a thermoplastic resin dispersed in the continuous phase,

wherein the thermoplastic resin forming the continuous phase has a glass transition temperature from -50 to 60°C, and the thermoplastic resin forming the dispersed phase has a glass transition temperature of 60°C or higher,

wherein the surface protective layer or adhesive layer or both contain inorganic particles that enhance blocking or scratch resistance of the protective layer or that facilitate release of the protective layer from the support upon heat transfer or both, and

wherein the surface protective layer or adhesive layer or both contain a wax that enhances blocking or scratch resistance of the protective layer or that facilitates release of the protective layer from the support upon heat transfer.

Claim 11 (previously presented). The image-protecting film according to claim 10, wherein the inorganic particles are present in the continuous phase of the surface protective layer in an amount of 10-60% by weight based on a resin content of the surface protective layer.

Claim 12 (previously presented). The image-protecting film according to claim 11, wherein the

inorganic particles comprise colloidal silica.

Claim 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (previously presented). The image-protecting film according to claim 10, wherein the wax is present in the continuous phase of the surface protective layer.

Claim 15 (previously presented). The image-protecting film according to claim 14, wherein the wax is present in the surface protective layer in an amount of 1 to 10% by weight based on a resin content of the surface protective layer.

Claim 16 (previously presented). An image protecting method comprising:

(a) integrating recorded matter on which an image has been formed with the image-protecting film according to claim 5 by heat pressing the protective layer onto the image surface of the recorded matter to form a laminated sheet, and then

(b) peeling off the support from the laminated sheet thereby forming a protective layer on the image surface.

Claim 17 (previously presented). An image protecting method comprising:

(a) integrating recorded matter on which an image has been formed with the image-protecting film according to claim 10 by heat pressing the protective layer onto the image surface of the recorded matter to form a laminated sheet, and then

(b) peeling off the support from the laminated sheet thereby forming a protective layer on the image surface.

Claim 18 (previously presented). An image protecting method comprising:

(a) integrating recorded matter on which an image has been formed with the image-protecting film according to claim 15 by heat pressing the protective layer onto the image surface of the recorded matter to form a laminated sheet, and then

(b) peeling off the support from the laminated sheet thereby forming a protective layer on the image surface.